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EDITORIAL COMMENT

A TIME TO PLUNGE

Last month, in the Department of Hospital and Training School Administration, Miss Riddle gave a description of the manner in which the Newton Hospital has enlarged its nursing force to meet the war situation. During the month, we have received an announcement circular from the Bellevue Training School, reading as follows:

To assist in meeting the need for a greatly increased number of professionally trained nurses during the war and for the reconstruction period that will inevitably follow, the Board of Managers of the Bellevue Training School for Nurses in coöperation with the trustees of the Department of Bellevue and Allied Hospitals and the General Medical Superintendent, is opening its two years and nine months' course to non-resident students. The curriculum will be identical with that of the present body of resident students, but the hours for the non-residents will be adjusted to suit conditions, the schedule for attendance being arranged on a basis of forty-eight hours a week. The first course will open December 1, 1917.

No tuition will be charged, but non-residents must bear all their own expenses, exclusive of uniforms and text-books.

College graduates, whether resident or non-resident, who have had satisfactory preparation especially in scientific work, will be given credit for a full academic year's work (namely, eight months). During the last six months of their course, to those whose standing and personal qualities permit of it, opportunity will be afforded to specialize, so that on graduation they will be specially equipped for executive service in hospitals, in public health, social service, district nursing, or other welfare work.

Word has just come from Miss Maxwell that the Presbyterian Hospital of New York has been able, through the generosity of interested friends, to provide increased housing accommodations for student nurses; to admit college graduates on an advanced basis, allowing them to complete their training in two years and three months instead of the usual three years; and by an arrangement with Teachers Col-

lege for a combination of courses in nursing, it has been made possible for student nurses to secure the diploma of the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing and the degree of Bachelor of Science from Teachers College.

It is noticeable that the leaders in this new movement are women who have been prominent in the nursing affairs of the country for many years and who have always given their support to every progressive movement in the nursing profession. All three are in positions allowing an unusual amount of independent initiative and all have back of them, boards of managers in full sympathy with the nursing ideals of the profession.

We believe that the superintendent of every school holds the key to the progress and development of her school in a much greater degree, perhaps, than the majority realizes; that under the right leadership, there are few boards so narrow in policy that they cannot be prevailed upon to make some effort to meet the situation which the war threatens to bring. Many superintendents are working along these lines and we shall hear later of far-reaching results.

Doubtless, also, many of our women will hold back because of that feeling which is prevalent among all classes of people, of hesitancy to depart from the beaten track, to do new things. We wish we could prevail upon these timid members to believe that half the glory of living lies in the ability to make a plunge now and then, to do something a little different. This is a time when the trying of what might seem a doubtful experiment is justifiable. A new movement can be carried forward with the stimulus of patriotic support which, under ordinary circumstances, might be impossible.

THE DISADVANTAGE OF INDECISION

Just at the present time, officials in every department of public work are being overwhelmed by the unusual stress of war conditions. In those departments which touch nursing work, our Red Cross officers of both national and local committees, whether serving voluntarily or on salary, are taxed to the very utmost to meet the demands of the increased enrollment. They would be saved a large amount of labor, to say nothing of the expense of postage, stationery, etc., if nurses could definitely make up their minds and then stick to their decision. Our experience in connection with local Red Cross work gives us some idea of what the pressure must be at headquarters. Application blanks are asked for and filled out, credentials are obtained from superintendents of schools, people in different places are appealed to for recommenda-

tions or to take time to fill out blanks. Members of committees leave their professional duties or their scant time of leisure to attend meetings and pass upon these applications, only to have the applicant, in many cases, change her mind and withdraw, possibly after the blanks have been forwarded to Washington or even after pin and appointment card have been sent. Such excuses as the objection of parents or an addition to one's salary in her present position or an unwillingness to leave home and country should have been foreseen, taken into consideration, and a decision made before the papers were even asked for.

This indecision has made the making up of the units for the base hospitals an indescribably difficult task for the chief nurses who are responsible for this work, because of the constant withdrawals and changes that have to be considered.

The Robb Scholarship Committee meets with the same difficulty, though in lesser degree. Out of thirty-four applicants for the present year, ten withdrew after their papers had been filled in and letters of recommendation secured. The fact that war was declared and that the Red Cross called for nurses, during the period that the applications were on file, altered the situation, but there are many withdrawals every year, even after the awards have been made.

Very few homes pay much attention to the importance of cultivating stability of purpose in their children, but certainly from the time a student enters a training school she should have impressed upon her the importance of making wise decisions and then of standing by them. These are essential qualifications for professional success.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON NURSING OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

In our August issue, we announced that the National Emergency Committee on Nursing had been taken over by the Council of National Defense in Washington and been made the Committee on Nursing of its General Medical Board. Our readers will be interested to know what sort of work this Committee has been taking up during the two summer months of its existence.

Up to the present time, the work has been largely that of investigation and tabulation. A questionnaire was sent to 1000 training school superintendents, 500 replies to which show that 51 per cent report no shortage of nurses; 44 per cent report a slight shortage; 95 per cent report that they can carry on their work satisfactorily for the present; 900 student nurses of the 1918 class, who will have completed their term of service before the date of graduation, can be released before

that date; 60 per cent report an increase of students; 40 per cent report local publicity measures to interest young women in nursing.

Seven hundred letters to hospital superintendents were sent out, signed by Doctors Martin and Simpson, to which 335 replies were received. Two hundred and twelve are willing to increase their classes; 30 have done so; 53 have increased their housing accommodations; 8 will train non-resident students; 5 are willing to reduce the hours of work.

Fourteen hundred letters were sent to principals of schools or to secretaries of boards of education which brought the committee 24,000 names and addresses, with expressions of interest and offers of assistance.

Ten thousand appeals to the college graduates of 1917 were sent out, bringing 550 replies with request for further information. Twenty of the leading schools have offered to give a shortened course to the college graduate.

Fourteen thousand letters have been sent to high school graduates.

These appeals are being supplemented by articles on nursing in magazines and newspapers, especially in small towns and rural districts.

It must be remembered that the Committee on Nursing is only a small part of the General Medical Board. At a meeting held in September, our representative, Miss Crandall, and a woman physician, were the only women to meet with fifty men. Reports from the sections of War, Navy, Public Health and the Red Cross showed plans for reëducation of crippled soldiers and sailors, for the control of venereal disease, for scientific care of the feet, for the securing of specialists in the care of eyes, ears, and throats. The report on nursing was received with appreciation and enthusiasm.

The Committee on Nursing is anxiously awaiting the result of the survey of nursing resources now being carried on by the state associations.

DUTY FOR EACH ONE

In the great movement to provide nurses to fill the places of those called into war service, no group of people can so ably assist as can the nurses who are readers of this JOURNAL. We are familiar with the situation in all of its detail, and it is largely from among the friends of the women already in the field that this great army of recruits will be gathered. If each reader of this magazine will make it her business to find one good candidate for a training school, this war situation would be taken care of, and what a simple way to accomplish it! A strong pull all together, and the deed is done.

THE USE OF THE "R.N."

The Pennsylvania State Board of Examiners has issued a circular letter to the superintendents of all training schools in the state, urging them to impress upon their graduates who are registered, the advisability of using the letters R.N. after their signatures, as a means of differentiating between the registered and the non-registered nurse, in the changes that are coming about because of war. The advice given by this board to the nurses of Pennsylvania applies, of course, to the nurses of the whole country. The only means of professional distinction which we possess is the title, Registered Nurse, and we take this means of passing on the message from Pennsylvania to the nurses of the country.

A CORRECTION

We are asked to correct an error in the official programme of the Philadelphia Convention and in the article, "The Relation of the Private Duty Nurse to the Public, as an Educator," published in the September issue of our JOURNAL. Both of these state that the writer, Miss Carolyn Gray, is connected with the Metropolitan Hospital rather than with the City Hospital, New York City.